

# Atropos

**Atropos** or **Aisa** (/ˈætrəpɒs/; Ancient Greek: Ἀτροπος "without turn"), in Greek mythology, was one of the three Moirai, goddesses of fate and destiny. Her Roman equivalent was Morta.

Atropos was the oldest of the Three Fates, and was known as the "inflexible" or "inevitable." It was Atropos who chose the mechanism of death and ended the life of mortals by cutting their thread with her "abhorred shears." She worked along with her two sisters, Clotho, who spun the thread, and Lachesis, who measured the length. Atropos has been featured in several stories such as Atalanta<sup>[1]</sup> and Achilles.



Bas relief of Atropos, shears in hand, cutting the thread of life

## Contents

**Origin**

**Medicine**

**Herpetology**

**References**

**External links**

## Origin

Her origin, along with the other two fates, is uncertain, although some called them the daughters of the night. It is clear, however, that at a certain period they ceased to be only concerned with death and also became those powers who decided what may happen to individuals. Although Zeus was the chief Greek god and their father, he was still subject to the decisions of the Fates, and thus the executor of destiny, rather than its source. According to Hesiod's *Theogony*, Atropos and her sisters (Clotho and Lachesis) were the daughters of Erebus (Darkness) and Nyx (Night) and sister to Thanatos and Hypnos, though later in the same work (ll. 901-906) they are said to have been born of Zeus and Themis.

## Medicine

Atropos lends her name to the genus *Atropa*, of which the poisonous plant *Atropa belladonna* (deadly nightshade) is a member, and to the alkaloid atropine, an anticholinergic drug which is derived from it.

## Herpetology

The scientific name of a venomous snake, *Bitis atropos*, refers to Atropos.<sup>[2]</sup>



## References

- ↑ Baldwin, James. "The Story of Atalanta" (https://www.gutenberg.org/files/11582/11582-h/11582-h.htm#THE\_STORY\_OF\_ATALANTA). *Old Greek Stories* (https://www.gutenberg.org/files/11582/11582-h/11582-h.htm). ISBN 978-1421932125.

2. Beolens, Bo; Watkins, Michael; Grayson, Michael (2011). *The Eponym Dictionary of Reptiles*. Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press. xiii + 296 pp. ISBN 978-1-4214-0135-5. ("Atropos", p. 12).

## External links

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-  Works related to Theogony at Wikisource
  -  The dictionary definition of Atropos at Wiktionary
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